

2030 Vision for Northern Australia

Rockhampton City & Capricorn Coast Region

7 February 2014

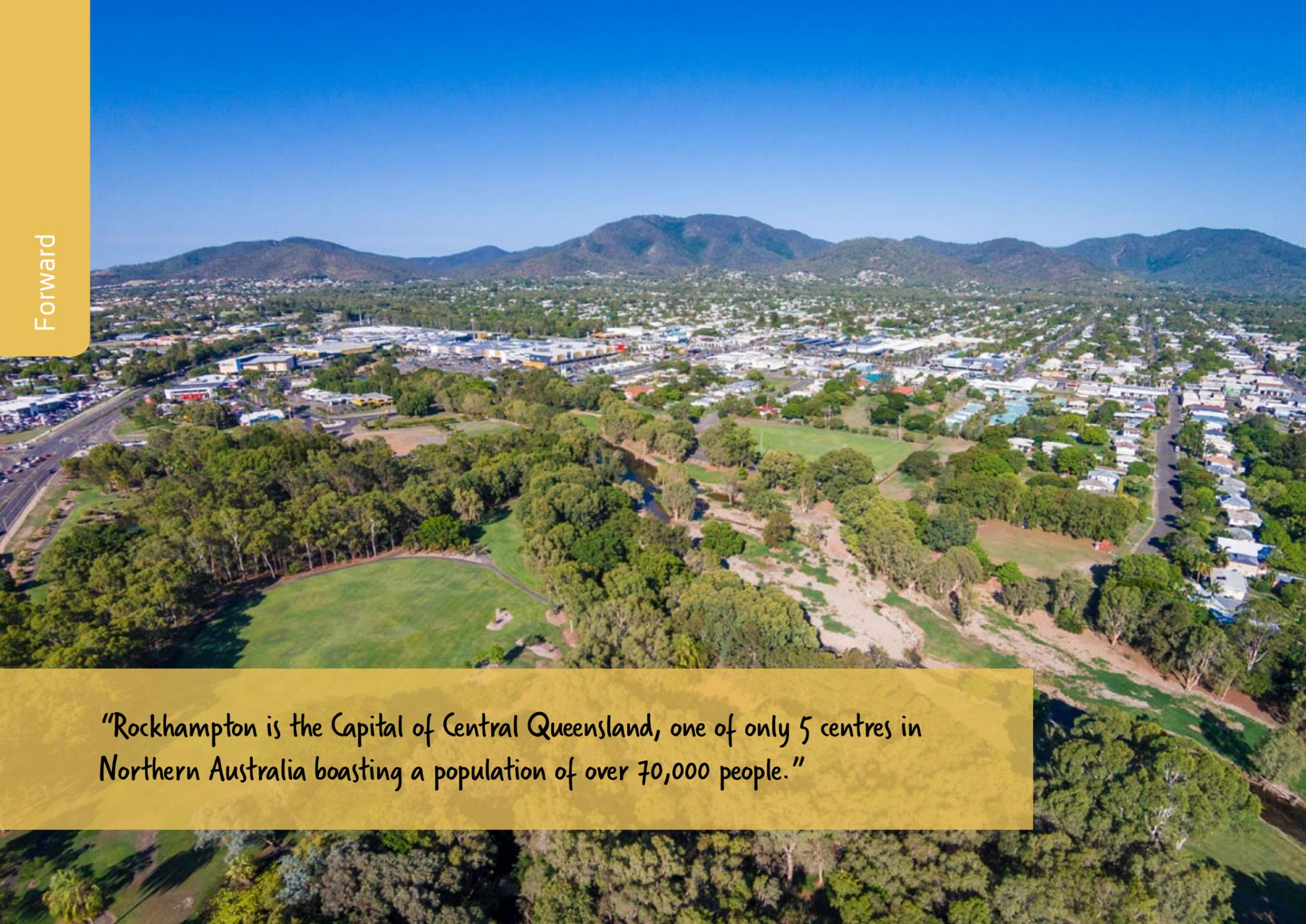




Contents

Forward	4
Theme 1 - Potential for Development	5
Theme 2 - Recommendations	6
Theme 3 - Critical Infrastructure	8

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“Rockhampton is the Capital of Central Queensland, one of only 5 centres in Northern Australia boasting a population of over 70,000 people.”

Forward

A 2030 vision for developing Northern Australia

Submission to the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia
For the attention of Dr Bill Pender, Inquiry Secretary

On behalf of the Rockhampton and Capricorn Coast Region in Central Queensland, we are pleased to submit our proposal to the **2030 Vision for Developing Northern Australia**. We welcome this opportunity, firstly amplifying the strategic strengths of the Central Queensland Region and secondly, how these strengths can be utilised in the future development of Northern Australia.

There are complex challenges that need to be addressed in formulating a strategy for northern development, the most obvious being all levels of Government working together to achieve a common goal. Whilst government intervention and support via a variety of infrastructure projects (including roads, rail, water storages and reserves, construction projects and social assets), incentives (taxation and other) and investment benefits, have initially been identified, **utilising the existing strengths of key Northern Regional Centres to assist in the development and implementation of strategic objectives will be paramount.**

The Rockhampton Region of Queensland, including Capricornia and key areas of Central Queensland, is one of only five centres in Northern Australia boasting a population of in excess of 70,000 persons, the others being Darwin (NT) and Cairns, Townsville and Mackay (Qld).

As a major population centre we offer a varied, diverse and affordable lifestyle, safe and inspirational communities, producing significant exports in resources and agriculture and skills.

We have the essential ingredients for assisting the continued growth of this region and northern Australia – water supply, land, power, social and sporting infrastructure, excellent education and health services and facilities, a diverse and buoyant economy, magnificent natural surrounds, and importantly a positive attitude!

Rockhampton is the Region of Innovation, with education, research, health and medical services, infrastructure, construction, transport, agriculture, tourism, mining support and community pride at the heart of our success.



Examine the potential for development of the region's mineral, energy, agricultural, tourism, defence and other industries.

"The Rockhampton Region's diverse economy in mineral/resources, energy, agricultural/food, tourism, defence, construction, education and health, offers enormous potential for further development."

MINERAL

- The Rockhampton Region is a major service provider to the mining industry: of businesses registered in the Rockhampton Region, 0.8% are in the mining industry compared to 0.5% of Queensland businesses. The mining industry employed 5.3% of Rockhampton Region workers compared to 2.6% of Queensland workers in 2011.
- Sibelco Australia Ltd Magnesite Operations (QMAG) carries out its magnesite mining operations from two locations at Kunwarara. Approximately 3.5 million tonnes of ROM ore is mined annually from a 400+ million tonne resource to produce around 600,000 tonnes of beneficiated magnesite per annum. Magnesite is transported to Sibelco's Parkhurst facility to produce almost 300,000 tonnes of calcined, deadburned and fused magnesite generating revenues up to approximately \$200 million. Export products are sold into the agriculture, chemical and refractory industries. Sibelco's Magnesite Operations employs around 350 employees.

ENERGY

- The Rockhampton Region has the 1,434 megawatt Stanwell Power Station – an environmentally friendly Power Station, supplying electricity to the national grid, with a capacity sufficient to power 1.5 million homes and offers ample land, water, geothermal and wind resources for further energy generation investments.

AGRICULTURE & FOOD

- Queensland exports more than \$3.4B in high-quality beef products annually to 79 countries. The Queensland Beef Industry employs more than 20,000 people directly and supports more than 8,000 jobs in the meat-processing industry.
- The development of feedlots in the Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor within the Rockhampton Region as identified in the Fitzroy Industry

and Infrastructure Study (FIIS) will allow for greater agricultural production.

- The development of a 15,000 head feedlot to expand the existing beef industry, as identified in the State government's FIIS (2003-2008) and endorsed in subsequent regional planning documents has the potential to turn off over 440,000 head of cattle annually, valued at \$500M pa.
- Established water taking limits on the Fitzroy River support agricultural growth in addition to population requirements.

TOURISM

- The Capricorn Integrated Resort (Iwasaki Sangyo Pty Ltd) proposal includes a \$600 million 1500 hectare integrated resort community. The main features will be:
 - 300 room, five-star resort including a golf course
 - Wagyu cattle farm – for farm stays, cattle and sheep farming and educational activities
 - Residential community of 8000 dwellings and village centre
 - Conservation precinct
 - Airstrip – for tourism, charter flights and a potential fly-in, fly-out hub
 - Refurbishment of the existing 331 room Mercure Capricorn Resort (independent of EIS process)

This development will create 19,000 jobs over approximately 20 years (8,500 on-site; 10,500 off-site) during construction, as well as 2,160 operational jobs.

- The Great Keppel Island resort development includes 575 hectares of environmental protection area, 750 eco resort villas and 300 eco resort apartments incorporating sustainable building design, rooftop solar panels and water tanks to provide for a developing tourist market.



DEFENCE

- Rockhampton Region is home to an Australian Defence Force Base and the Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area. Exercises frequently involve in excess of 30,000 troops through ongoing Australian military training activities, annual military training activities of the Singaporean Armed Forces (SAF) and biennial training exercises with the US military. Over 17,000 foreign troops are involved biannually, with rest and recreation as well as physical training and PR activities undertaken within Rockhampton.
- International Military Engagement contributes to the local economy and reinforces partnerships with industry and the community.
- The international, heavy-lift air freight capability in Rockhampton Regional Airport, allows unrestricted wide-bodied operations and a mix of wide-bodied aircraft including the B747 to B777 and A340 types. Recent international visitations include: B747 Jumbo (Air NZ, Qantas), B77 (Singapore Airlines), AN-124 (VDA), A330 (Air Luxor), MD-11 (Fedex), B757 (ATA).
- Classifying Rockhampton Airport at an International status will allow direct international connections (tourism and defence) plus export/import cargo's to benefit the Northern Regions.

HEALTH

- The Rockhampton region has major public and private health facilities including the Base and Mater hospitals, with more than 6,000 persons employed in health care and social assistance providing services to the wider region.
- The CQUniversity community allied health clinic is a working tertiary teaching clinic that services up to 1000 patients a week in physio, oral health, podiatry, speech pathology, occupational therapy and nutrition.
- By developing Stage 3 of the CQUniversity allied health clinic, ward space would be provided for mental health & well-being services/ aged care/respite care, effectively giving Rockhampton a non-acute teaching hospital. A non-acute teaching hospital would raise the profile of the city and act as a drawcard for professionals and their families.

CONSTRUCTION

- The local TAFE is fantastic at delivering vocational trades and qualifications in construction, but the potential for much greater research and innovation in this space will be unlocked by the merger of CQ TAFE and CQUniversity. The community and construction industry will benefit from one institution which has both Vocational Education & Training-informed research, and research-informed Vocational Education & Training.

The construction industry in the Rockhampton Region is well equipped to manage growth with the largest number of business registered in the region being in the construction industry, 1,561 businesses or 19.7 per cent of registered businesses in 2011-12. In the 2011 Census, the construction industry was the Rockhampton Region's fourth largest employer with 4,370 persons employed, or 8.8 per cent of the region's employed persons.

EDUCATION

- The CQUniversity offers the full traditional range of tertiary studies and is committed to excellence in research and innovation. Research strengths of the university include agriculture, power and rail engineering, safety and fatigue management, indigenous engagement as well as VET – all pertinent to the development of the North!
- The CQUniversity merger with CQ TAFE, will provide a more responsive and flexible application to the full spectrum of post-school education.
- It is proven that if you train locally, you retain locally. CQUniversity Rockhampton campus delivers skilled graduates who build professional careers in the region.
- CQUniversity has historically been one of the international student giants in Australia, and is still one of the largest providers of education to

"On 1 July 2014, Rockhampton's CQUniversity and CQ TAFE will officially merge to become Queensland's first dual sector university"



international students; the International student market is Australia's 4th largest export industry.

- CQUniversity's CQIRP facility (Central Qld Innovation and Research Precinct – formerly CSIRO laboratories), is the community's 'ideas factory'; engaging with local industry to research and develop innovations that help Central Queensland reach its full potential.
- CQUniversity's research areas of excellence attract world-leading experts in their chosen field; whether that heavy-industrial rail application research driving our supply-chain efficiency for the resource sector, or leading resource economists analysing trends and forecasts for the mining sector, leading mental health nursing researchers growing the next generation of local health workers, or leading agronomists informing best practice for the Northern Australia beef herd.
- CQUniversity is very reactive to community and industry demand, responding to particular skills shortages and industry knowledge gaps quickly through introducing new courses and material, modifying existing offerings, or directing research and resources at areas of need. CQ will be a leader in defining how new education models can help Northern Australia unlock its full potential.
- Encouraging the Northern Australia Universities to collaborate on identified programs to benefit the Region is imperative.



Provide Recommendations to:

ENHANCE TRADE AND OTHER INVESTMENT LINKS WITH THE ASIA-PACIFIC;

- The Gracemere Industrial Area (GIA), allows the operation of high impact industries 24 hour, 7 day a week operations, access by a \$50M overpass on Capricorn Highway (opened May 2013). GIA approval equates to 2500 jobs and \$500M to local/regional economy for every 50ha developed.
- The Central Queensland Livestock Exchange (CQLX) and two of the largest abattoirs in the country are primary resources in expanding international trade opportunities.
- Koorana Crocodile Farm at Coowonga on the Capricorn Coast has 3,000 crocodiles, selling high quality product in Australia as well as exporting to the USA, Japan and Europe. Koorana is a working farm open to visitors, also offering educational tour year round and is a major tourist attraction for the region.

ESTABLISH A CONDUCTIVE REGULATORY, TAXATION AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT;

- Current planning scheme processes can allow for reduction in red and green tape whilst supporting the continued growth of all business and industry.

ADDRESS IMPEDIMENTS TO GROWTH;

- The Rockhampton Region is able to address impediments to growth and already has several systems in place to provide opportunities for future growth and development.
- There is a North/South and East/West Rail line servicing Queensland between the state capital Brisbane, Cairns and Longreach.
- Rockhampton is at the crossroads of two major highways servicing Queensland's North/South corridors (National Highway No 1 – Bruce Highway), and the East/West corridor (Capricorn Highway).

- The CQUniversity dual sector approach to post-school education will transform the way local industries are supplied with well-rounded graduates and trainees who are far better equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of this unique economic zone.
- The 1,434 megawatt Stanwell Power Station is an environmentally friendly Power Station, supplying electricity to the national grid. Its capacity to power 1.5 million homes demonstrates the region's ability to cater for increased growth and development. Its ample land, water, geothermal and wind resources allow for further energy generation investments.
- This region has been selected as an area which will have access to the National Broadband Network (NBN). Areas to the north and west of Rockhampton have access to fixed wireless and fibre is available to a limited number of new developments in Gracemere, Rockhampton and Emu Park. With connectivity via the NBN Service (or similar), there are opportunities for the Region to deliver expanded and enhanced economic, educational, cultural and social services.
- Locals and new residents will have their job opportunities maximised by the flexible training offered by the dual sector university to meet skills demands.



CAPRICORN COAST & ROCKHAMPTON REGION

SET CONDITIONS FOR PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND INNOVATION;

- The Rockhampton Region's diverse economy and established partnerships with education provides an environment in which private investment and innovation can flourish.
- Agriculture - CQUniversity's CQIRP facility is a world class cattle handling and research laboratory, which is driving CQUniversity's strengths in Agriculture Research and Development.
- In 2012, Sunwater Ltd and Gladstone Area Water Board were approved to prepare an EIS for the Lower Fitzroy River Infrastructure project – by raising the dam wall at Eden Bann Weir and building a new weir at Rookwood near Riverslea the Region will continue to safeguard future water supplies, providing secure water conditions for investment in the region.
- With major integrated resort developments planned for Great Keppel Island and Iwasaki Sangyo, there are already major investment and innovation opportunities in the Rockhampton Region, which will serve as a catalyst for future growth and investment.
- CQUniversity's strength is its "power of place" which is in the heart of the state's resource epicentre. Research and undergraduate studies that contribute to the prosperity of this sector are immense; rail research, fatigue and human factors research and engineering research are all world class, plus engineering/environmental science graduates (along with other vital industry professionals including accountants, HR managers, chemists) all help drive the industry providing a skilled workforce to support investment opportunities.

"Rockhampton's Fitzroy River is the second largest water catchment in Australia and Stanwell Power Station (1460 megawatt) is the largest power provider in Queensland."



Rockhampton Art Gallery

Identify the critical economic and social infrastructure needed to support the long term growth of the region, and ways to support planning and investment in that infrastructure.

- The Rockhampton Region in Central Queensland is an existing key urban centre with the ability to substantially increase its population.
- The Region has projected growth to 162,873 persons by 2031, which will require an additional 20,000+ dwellings: there are 4,500 residential allotments currently approved with current capacity for 10,000 people, demonstrating the readiness of the region to expand.
- Acclaimed regional cultural facilities (including Botanic Gardens, Art Gallery, Pilbeam Theatre, Walter Reid Cultural Centre, Heritage Village, Dreamtime Cultural Centre) exist in the region and are well used by residents and tourists.
- International and national standard sporting facilities (including FINA standard swimming pool, rowing, tennis, gymnastics, hockey, cycling, squash, bowls, softball, sailing, yachting, basketball, football) are in place to support long term growth.
- The region boasts one of the largest regional shopping complexes in Queensland; supporting some of the 5,425 people employed in the Retail sector in 2011, adding to the diverse economy and providing a vital facility to the community.
- The region provides many lifestyle options – sea change, tree change, city living, rural, rural residential or suburban allowing new residents opportunities to access environments that support their needs.
- Local Governments need place visions for their communities which support long term growth through both hard and soft infrastructure, with high standard planning schemes that cater for future opportunities and respect the natural, social and economic environs.
- Winning the CQNRL bid will attract 70,000 extra visitors per NRL game to Rockhampton and support further investment in infrastructure.
- Redevelopment of the Rockhampton Riverfront and Yeppoon Coastal Foreshore will increase opportunities for community events; development of open spaces and amenities, river walks, boardwalks, functioning wharfs, cruises and commercial ventures provide vital social and economic opportunities for the region.
- The upgrade of the Bruce Highway, Queensland major north-south highway, will provide improved access to northern centres.
- Build the Bruce Highway Deviation in response to the demand on the road network and its vulnerability to flooding.
- By building an alternate rail crossing of the Fitzroy River to remove trains from the City (Denison St in particular) improved city connectivity and materials transport is possible.
- The upgrade of rail infrastructure to support the efficient movement of freight and passengers to other key centres will assist in mitigating the distances involved in travelling in Northern Australia.
- The region continues to retain its best and brightest by offering excellent education facilities, affordable lifestyle choices and a diversity of employment opportunities.

“The Rockhampton Region has sufficient land, water, energy and resources to support long term sustainable growth in Northern Australia.”



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